Prisoner Can't Rest In Peace

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The Deputy U.S. marshal wasn't quite sure what to do about the prisoner who refused to leave the small cell and enter Courtroom 12 of D.C. Superior Court.

"He's got an attitude problem, your honor," the marshal told judge Charles W. Halleck.

"Of course he's got an attitude problem," the judge later told a reporter. "He's serving one to 10 years for robbery, and they keep bringing him up here for sentencing for something he didn't have anything to do with."

Somewhere in the depths of the D.C. jail and Lorton reformatory there are at least three, and by at least one account, four Maurice Johnsons and the department of corrections seems to be having a problem keeping them straight.

The Third Time

One of the Johnsons was due in Halleck's courtroom yesterday for sentencing on a charge of receiving stolen property, but for the third time since Feb. 16 the wrong man was delivered to the courthouse.

Halleck sent Margery Willis, financee of the Johnson due in court. back with the marshal yesterday to identify the Johnson in the cell behind the courtroom. She returned moments later and confirmed the third mistake. She had had the same problems, she told the judge, when she went to visit her Maurice Johnson at D.C. jail.

"Instead of asking him by name, ask for him by number," Halleck advised.

"I asked for 165468," she said, "but they bring the wrong one."

'A Cruise Director'

"Ma'am, there's nothing I can do," responded Halleck. "The system breaks down at least 15 per cent of the time. I've turned into a cruise director instead of a judge."

Anderson McGruder, superintendent of the jail, said after briefly investigating the Johnson identity crisis, "We have two Maurice Johnsons here, and the case numbers were inadvertently misfired. There are three Maurice Johnsons in the system, two are here and one is at Lorton.

Miss Wills told a reporter, "I went down there (to the jail) one time and they brought out four Maurice Johnsons. I picked him out." McGruder said he knew nothing of the incident.

The grandmother of the Maurice Johnson due in sented with the wrong man

"I sent him back," said court said she was also pre- at the jail.

Mrs. Laura Green. He wasn't my boy. I just sent him back. I don't know what's wrong with those people (at the jail), but someone's upside their heads."

Halleck ordered the sentencing postponed a week.